attend the first meeting of the India-Israel Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation, held during September 17-20, 2002. No purchase agreement was signed during the visit.

Increase of Sanitary Staff-Strength in Secunderabad Cantonment Board

2864. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the sanitary staff-strength of Secunderabad Cantonment Board has increased proportionately to meet the heavy demand of 500 civilian colonies;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) There has been no increase in the sanitary staff-strength of Secunderabad Cantonment Board. The additional work load of both sweeping and cleaning of garbage from 250 housing colonies are undertaken by engaging private contractors. The arrangement is working satisfactorily.

Joint Exercises with US and France

2865. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that IAF has entered into an agreement with the US and France to conduct joint exercises in air and ground warfare;

(b) if so, whether this represents a major strategic shift in India's Defence policy; and

(c) if so, the details of this cooperation and their long and short-term objectives?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) As part of international defence cooperation, joint exercises are planned with French and US Air Force.

(b) and (c) The exercises are only a part of bilateral defence cooperation.

Opening of Defence Production of Private Sector

2866. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Defence production would be open for private sector;

(b) if so, whether the security aspect have been assessed before opening of Defence production to private sector; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) In May, 2001 Defence industry sector, which was hitherto reserved from the public sector has been opened upto 100% for Indian Private Sector participation with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), permissible upto 26%, both subject to licensing. This includes all types of defence equipment. Detailed guidelines were issued by the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) after consultation with the Ministry of Defence and Industry Associations for consideration of applications for grant of license in January, 2002.

2. The security concerns have been adequately addressed by incorporating the following provisions in the guidelines:—

(i) Adequate safety and security procedures would be put in place by the licensee once the licence is granted and production commences. These would be subject to verification by authorized Government agencies.

(ii) Arms and ammunition produced by the private manufacturers will be primarily sold to the Ministry of Defence. These items may also be sold to other Government entities under the control of the Ministry of Home affairs and State Governments with the prior approval of the Ministry of Defence. No such item shall be sold within the country to any other person or entity. The export of manufactured items would be subject to policy and guidelines as applicable to Ordnance Factories and Defence Public Sector Undertakings. Non-lethal items would be permitted